

DECEMBER 12, 1964

Girl Spy against Castro

MIRTHA MARGARITA Borrás y Almanza, a quiet, bright, melting-diamond-eyed girl who wanted to be a language teacher, has become instead, at 21, a full-time underground agent working against Fidel Castro. An honor graduate of an exacting secret-service school near Miami, Fla., she has three missions in Cuba to her credit. She attends refresher courses in outlandish skills, from quick-draw grenade handling to booby-trapping electric appliances. While training, Mirtha wears an identification badge with her cover name, to remind old friends she might meet that no one must call out her real name. Security forbids it.

Mirtha has three watches: a street watch, a waterproof, luminous stopwatch and a special watch for the secret radio traffic that runs on 24-hour time. They regulate her life, because, she says, "in the underground, everything is always timed to the minute." She is philosophical about the harsh loneliness of the covert existence, which sometimes even keeps her from visiting her stepparents, sister and three brothers when she is in Miami.